

Wise men, though all laws were abolished, would lead the same lives.
— Aristophanes

The ECHO

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 'Why,
 hypocrite?'
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Published Since 1928

Volume 83, No. 7, September 2011

Distributed Free to Texas Prisoners

The 2011 TX-CURE Indigent Prisoner Fan Program planning 2012 project

This summer has been very hot, and TX-CURE has been swamped with requests for fans for indigent prisoners. The organization would like to be able to provide a fan for everyone who needs one, but it is dependent on donations from the public. Therefore, some requests will go unfilled this year.

The deadline has passed for TX-CURE to submit names to TDCJ for fans for indigent prisoners. Offenders who applied to get a fan from TX-CURE and did not get one this year may apply again for the 2012 program beginning Jan.1, 2012.

PROJECT continued on page 5



Lane Murray Unit GED graduates are M. Espinoza, R. Ketchum, G. Melton, A. Farsetti, A. Abbott, A. Taylor, R. Reed, T. Matheny, M. Valdivia, S. Ramirez, E. Canales, M. Osby, D. Montgomery, S. Thomas, C. Rutledge, M. Ramos, A. Oudems, S. Johnson, S. Elliott, A. Jasso, K. Miller, A. Pullen, J. Dunn and A. Navarrete. See more event photographs on pages 13-14.

Legislature passes new health care fee for offenders

Beginning Sept. 28, 2011, a new state law goes into effect that amends Section 501.063, Texas Government Code, and changes the fee amount the Department of Criminal Justice is required to collect from each offender who requests a visit to a health care provider.

Offenders will be charged a \$100 fee for the first health care visit requested. An offender makes such a request by completing and submitting a Sick Call Request form or by requesting a staff member to provide assistance in accessing a routine health care service that is not an emergency or considered life-threatening as a walk-in patient.

This fee covers all health care visits that an offender would request for one year. For any visit that is requested after the one year period, a new fee of \$100 will be charged. If an offender does not request a health care visit, no fee for health care services will be assessed.

The fee will be charged to the offender's in-

mate trust fund account. If there is no money in the offender's trust fund account, the law requires that 50 percent of each deposit to the trust fund account be applied to the amount owed until the total amount is paid.

Offenders will not be charged for a health care visit that is for:

- an emergency or life-threatening situation;
- follow-up services recommended by the health care staff;
- chronic care (including communicable diseases such as HIV, AIDS and TB);
- prenatal care;
- health screening and evaluations related to the diagnostic and reception process;
- health care services necessary to comply with state law and regulations.

Offenders will not be denied health care if there is no money in their trust fund accounts to pay the fee.

82nd Legislature enacts criminal justice legislation

The following House bills (HB) and Senate bills (SB) were passed by the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas.

HB 3 by Thompson – provides that a person convicted of aggravated sexual assault who has previously been convicted of that offense or continuous sexual abuse of a young child must serve a sentence of life without the possibility of parole.

HB 200 by Parker – requires that inmate release notifications be provided by email or other electronic communication. The bill also requires TDCJ to electronically notify the United States Social Security Administration upon the release or discharge of a prisoner from a state correctional facility who was receiving Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance immediately prior to confinement and was confined for less than 12 consecutive months.

LEGISLATION continued on page 5

The ECHO

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PUBLISHED FOR 83 YEARS, SINCE 1928

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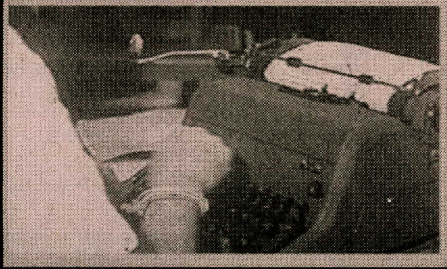
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To the editor,

There are two days in every week during which we should not worry. These two days should be kept free from fear and ego. One of these days is YESTERDAY, with all of its mistakes, cares, aches and pains. YESTERDAY has passed, forever beyond our control. All the money in the world cannot bring it back. YESTERDAY is gone forever.

The other day we should not worry about is TOMORROW, with all its possible adversities, burdens, large promises and poor performances. TOMORROW is also beyond our immediate control. TOMORROW's sun will rise, either in great brightness or behind a mask of clouds. But it *will* rise. Until it does, though, we have no stake in TOMORROW, for it is yet to begin. We only have one day left: TODAY.

For most of us who are incarcerated, we add to the burdens of those other two days—YESTERDAY and TOMORROW. What drives a person crazy is the remorse and/or bitterness of something that happened YESTERDAY and the dread of what TOMORROW may bring. Thus, we should strive to live but one day at a time—TODAY!

The key is FORGIVENESS!

Charlotte Bussey
Plane State Jail

To the reader,

You make some good points for all of us to consider. I would add that forgiveness is absolutely necessary for YESTERDAY. I would also add that planning is absolutely necessary for TOMORROW. However, we all need to be sure to live in TODAY.

POCATELLO ID 832
25 MAR 2011 PM 1 T



To the editor,

Please, may I give kudos and congratulations to the young author of

the essay "The Enemy" in the April, 2011 issue of *The ECHO*. I am now 46 years old, and this is my second time in TDCJ. If only I had understood at age 25, like the author, that I was my very own worst enemy. In my youth, I was dumb enough to quit good paying jobs because I did not like having somebody telling me what to do. Now I realize that they just want you to do it their way. Like it or not, they're the boss. You have a better way to do something and they won't listen? No problem. Just hang in there, do a good job, become the boss, and then do things your way.

When I turned 28, I finally decided to try community college. All I ended up doing was chasing girls and not doing any homework. I eventually quit. There was nothing hard about it. They give you a book with the answers in it. You just have to read it a couple of times before the tests and listen during class. I am certainly going to try it again when I get released.

For all the angry youngsters in TDCJ, let me tell you that life is just an endurance test. Don't get frustrated. The "Good Life" does not just happen as fast as you want it to, but it *does* happen if you hang in there and prove yourself. Again, to become a boss at work in the world, you have to do what your bosses tell you to do.

John Logan
Neal Unit



To the reader,

Thanks for your words of wisdom. The quicker we learn these things, the better off we will be. Thanks for sharing your thoughts with our readers.

To the editor,

On May 18th, while on lockdown, I got the call that everyone in white dreads—a call out to the chaplain's office. I was thinking that it might have been my father who may have

passed away. He is sick with cancer and is 80 years old. I also thought that it might be my ex-wife, who is also battling cancer.

But I was not prepared for the tragic news that the chaplain gave me. My only child—my 23-year-old son—was hit by a car and killed after his car stalled in traffic. My son attempted to cross the Interstate and was struck.

I was devastated by this news. I am still in shock. I am heartbroken. I was not allowed to go to his funeral. That was even harder to bear.

I want to convey to all my brothers in white—trust in God. It is this hope that I carry that will enable me to maintain. This is a test of faith to which nothing else can compare. True faith is seeing the goodness of God in every circumstance. This is what I cling to.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the men in white here at the Michael Unit for their compassionate words and their many prayers. You would not believe the genuine show of support I have received from these men. It has been overwhelming.

I also want to thank Chaplain Carlos and Sergeants Hanna, Kirkpatrick, Odiaka and Purvis for their words and taking the time out of their busy schedules to see that I was okay. These above-named individuals make me still believe in the human race. Even inside these walls, there are those in civilian clothes and uniform who try to make a difference.

I just wanted to share this with all my brothers in white.

Respectfully,
A.B. Barfield III
Michael Unit



To the reader,

Thanks for sharing with us your tragedy and your experience. Your kind words when faced with such grief are an encouragement, as we will all face difficult times in our lives, sooner or later.

Dear Darby,

I have been in TDCJ for only a short period of time, but I am looking at a somewhat long sentence. This idea came to me one night as I was waiting for that precious mail that took longer than expected. We all know that when mail comes, there is actually a little spark in all of us hoping to get some mail. When the officer actually calls out our name, we are happy even if we don't yet know who wrote to us. That is my point; we are happy to receive those letters. But on several occasions, once we open them, our joy goes away as we read news from the outside world and realize there is very little we can do about the news. In that moment, I realized that a pen pal was needed. But not one from the outside world, because the outcome would be the same. Instead, an ideal pen pal would be another offender who is experiencing the same things as we are. We would actually have a lot of things to talk about.

We could use *The ECHO* as our forum. Offenders who want a pen pal would mail a profile to *The ECHO*, and you could print it. Then whoever was interested would have to mail a request for the addresses of the individuals they are interested in writing to. It's just an idea, but other offenders might be interested in it.

Thank you for your time and I hope you give some thought to this idea. Just another offender trying to make the time go by faster.

**Beto
Garza West**

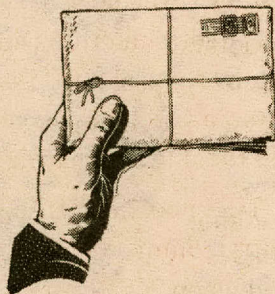
Dear Beto,

I'm sure you're probably aware that such an idea is just a pipe dream. Years ago, TDCJ stopped allowing offender-to-offender correspondence (with the exception of relatives). But even if you were still allowed to write to another offender, my guess would be that *The ECHO* is not very likely to ever become a social network.

Perhaps it's time for you to ask around and get the address of an actual pen pal organization. There

are dozens of them, and they actually work. I know several people who even have multiple pen pals.

So, Beto, rather than making your time go faster by coming up with ideas that would never be approved, perhaps it's time for you to enter the real world. There are pen pals out there for you. You need only take the time to look. *The ECHO* will not be providing pen pal information.

**Dear Darby,**

Hey there, old wise one. I would like to ask you this question to see if you can give me a straight answer. As your readers know, most of the problems in dayrooms start with a group of certain offenders who hog the TV from other offenders, which results in fights. So my question to you is, if the TDCJ commissary can sell typewriters for \$225, why can't they sell small flat screen TVs like those in protective custody have in their cells? Since TDCJ is hurting for money, why not sell offenders TVs for about \$150 to \$200? By doing so, they would put an end to all of the TV hogs and at the same time give a boost of money to the prison system. I know that I would be the first in line to buy one so that I could watch what I want on TV and not what others want to watch.

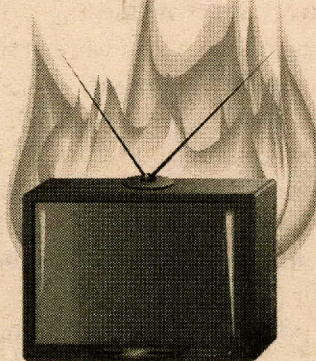
**Big Dog
Stiles Unit**

Dear Big Dog,

My question to you is, what if most of those "hogs" are indigent? Would your idea stop the fighting then? And how about those who go to the dayroom solely for the interaction with other people? I seriously doubt that those individuals would stay in their cells and watch TV. But how many of them number among that hogger demographic?

I suppose what I'm getting at is that commissary-purchased TVs would not solve any problems in the dayroom. They would only enable offenders who have enough money to purchase them to have yet another advantage over those who are indigent. And, too, selling TVs would also eliminate—at least for that select few who could afford them—the invaluable lessons that can be learned by having to deal with those hogs. One such lesson that immediately comes to mind is the one whereby offenders must learn to come up with pastimes other than watching television. Because anyone who believes that watching TV in here is helping prepare them for the trials and tribulations they will face in the free world is a fool.

So in essence, the hogs are providing more assistance to you—from a self-improvement standpoint—than any commissary-purchased TV ever could. The next time you witness someone hogging the TV, you may want to thank him (silently, of course) for contributing to your betterment. Because for every missed television program, there is an excellent book, magazine article, or newspaper editorial to be read. And for those out there who will cry, "I don't have access to reading material!" I would say...well, you can always read *The ECHO* cover to cover: *If you do, you might learn a few things.*

**Dear Darby,**

I greatly enjoy and appreciate the publications you guys work so hard to send out. There was an article entitled "Making the Right Choices in Life." I often send these types of messages home to my daughter and niece. Not to glamorize prison life,

DEAR DARBY

LETTERS TO THE OL' THANG

but hopefully to deter them from traveling the road that I've traveled. So not only are you giving us on the inside something to reflect on, but you are getting through to those on the outside, especially my children. I share many of your stories with them.

So thank you for the positive messages, and please keep them coming. Those of you who are brave and open enough to share your stories, keep sharing. They are indeed serving a purpose.

**Tonetha Henry
Crane Unit**

**Dear Ms. Henry,**

I sincerely hope that everyone who reads your letter will be inspired enough by it to follow in your footsteps. I watch a program called *Beyond Scared Straight* on television. Most people in prison probably are familiar with the program's premise. It's geared toward trying to scare young people who are making bad choices in life. They are sent to prisons and given an intensive look at the worst-case scenario of those bad choices. It is typically a one-shot deal. Some of the youngsters, after the experience, continue to get into trouble, perhaps due to the fact that the impact doesn't last.

If, however, those young people had someone like you in their lives who was willing to share the stories she reads in a prison newspaper so that they'll receive a monthly booster shot of "scared straight", then maybe the impact would have a more lasting effect.

My guess is that all of the individuals who take the time to write the articles will be thrilled to know that people like you, Ms. Henry, are putting their stories to such a positive use. So thank you for letting them know that their thoughts and ideas are actually transcending the prison walls. Hopefully your letter will motivate others to share as well.

HEALTH NEWS — NUTRITION — MEDICAL UPDATES

The world's fittest man busts myths

By William Chaplar
Staff Writer

Here's something on health and fitness that everyone should be able to appreciate. The authority for what you are about to read is not some lab-coat-bedecked physiologist. Instead, it is none other than the Guinness world record holder for the 24-hour Physical Fitness Challenge: Joe Decker. This challenge included 13 separate events among which were such feats as cycling, running, swimming and weightlifting. The guy actually did 1,100 pushups! Suffice to say that Joe Decker has earned his title of the "World's Fittest Man."

In his book, *The World's Fittest You: Four Weeks to Total Fitness*, Joe Decker dispels several myths regarding diet and exercise. Listed here are a few of the more prevalent ones. Since myths and rumors seem to reign supreme in the penitentiary, we would all do well to pay heed whenever they are being dispelled by any noted authority.

Myth Number 1: You can get fit with just eight minutes of physical activity a day.

According to Decker, eight minutes is probably *not* enough for anyone seriously wanting to get fit. For someone who is just starting out, though, the fitness guru believes that eight is enough. Just don't allow yourself to get stuck in the eight-minute-abs rut. As you become fitter, you'll want to go for longer periods.

Myth Number 2: You won't see results without feeling pain.

While the iron pumpers might swear to the necessity for soreness after *every* good workout, Mr. Decker believes the whole no-pain-no-gain concept is outdated. In fact, he advises us to stop if we feel pain, because it's our body's way of telling us something is wrong. Remember, there will be a little soreness at the very start (when

you activate those muscles that have probably lain dormant since high school!), but once you get into the swing of things, the soreness should cease. If it doesn't, you're probably doing something wrong!

Myth Number 3: You need to take expensive muscle-building supplements and shakes to build a better body.

Joe says it ain't so! Instead, save your money and let the iron pumpers waste theirs on whey powder and amino acid pills. You can save a little more money by giving up on the junk food that you buy at the commissary. Instead of filling your locker with empty calories, try waking up and going to breakfast! Which, by the way, brings us to...

Myth Number 4: A quick and easy way to knock off a few pounds is to skip meals.

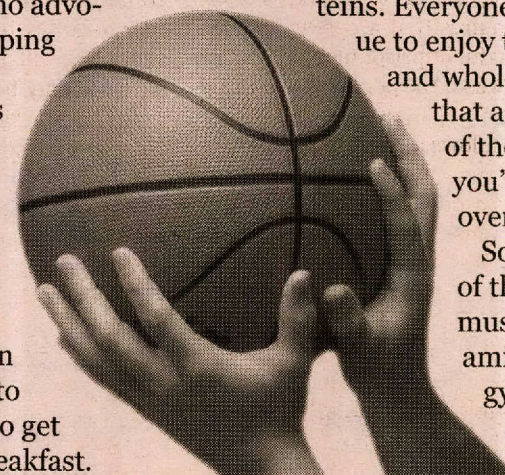
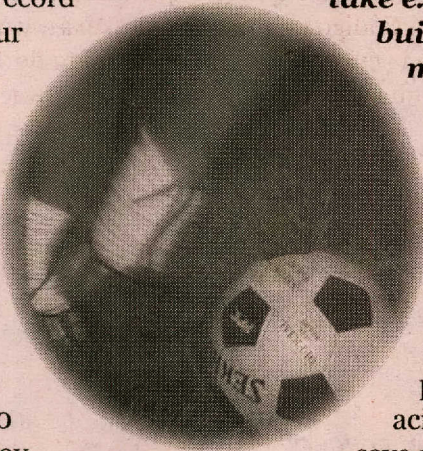
Anyone who still believes this myth hasn't been paying attention! There is probably not an expert left in the field who advocates the skipping of meals. Mr. Decker points out that, by doing so, you actually slow down your metabolism. This is not good when you're trying to lose weight. So get up and eat breakfast. But first tell your iron-pumping cellie—the kitchen worker—to stop sucking down all those raw eggs! Let the eggs go where they're supposed to go—the serving line.

Myth Number 5: The more

carbohydrates you eat, the fatter you'll become.

According to The World's Fittest Man, let the carbophobes sit around trying to make a well-rounded diet out of fats and proteins. Everyone else should continue to enjoy the fruits, vegetables and whole grains (all carbs!) that are advocated by all of those food pyramids you've no doubt seen over the years.

So, the next time one of those iron-pumping, muscle-mag-reading, amino-acid-popping gym rats tells you how to get fit, politely decline his advice and let him or her know that you're taking your suggestions from the World's Fittest Man. Real fitness after all is a lifestyle, not a hobby. Embrace the lifestyle. It may help you live a little longer.



The gait-way to longevity

Staff Report

Want to live longer? It might be as simple as picking up the rate of your gait. The January, 2011, issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* included an analysis of nine different studies involving more than 34,000 people ages 65 and older. According to that analysis, faster walking speeds were actually associated with living longer.

The lead researcher of the studies, Stephanie Studenski, M.D., a geriatric physician at the University of Pittsburgh, noted that "walking is a reliable measure of well-being because it requires body support, timing and power and it places demands on the brain, spinal cord, muscles, joints, heart and lungs."

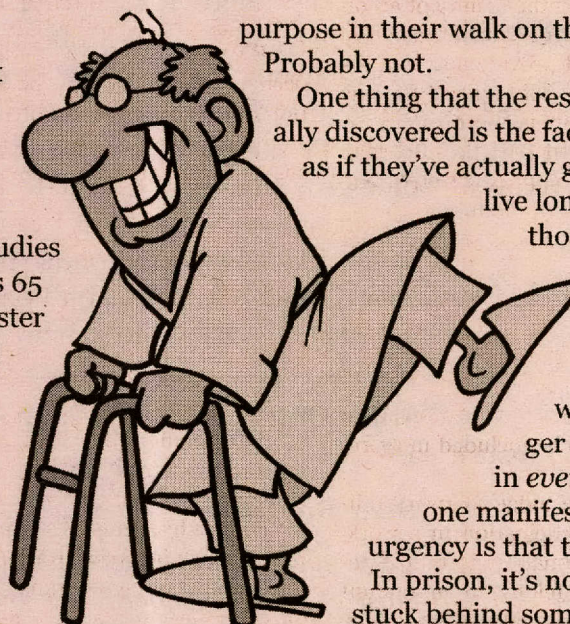
Now, while these studies focused exclusively on seniors, it stands to reason that those in their 30s, 40s and 50s can learn something from them. Think about it for a moment. Does anyone honestly believe that people who shuffle around at a snail's pace in their forties are going to somehow develop a sense of

purpose in their walk on their 65th birthday?

Probably not.

One thing that the researchers may have actually discovered is the fact that people who walk as if they've actually got a purpose in life may live longer. It may not be that those who intentionally decide to walk fast at certain times will live longer. Instead, it may simply be that people who are going to live longer have a sense of urgency in *everything* they do—and one manifestation of that sense of urgency is that they walk fast.

In prison, it's not uncommon to be stuck behind someone in a hallway or on a sidewalk who is moving so slowly you feel the need to check to see if they have a pulse! It's probably no secret that most people in prison have no sense of urgency whatsoever. So take heart whenever you are forced to take baby steps behind someone who is just aimlessly shuffling along on their way to chow. You can rest easy in the knowledge that the natural pep in your step might actually be adding years to your life.





AGENCY INFO — POLICY UPDATES — LEGAL NEWS



LEGISLATION continued from page 1

HB 417 by Anchia – requires TDCJ to provide information to any wrongfully imprisoned person regarding how to obtain compensation and contact information for nonprofit advocacy groups that will assist them in their efforts. The information must be provided at the time of release or as soon as practicable after the date of a full pardon or granting of relief on the basis of innocence. The bill also requires that a person entitled to compensation for wrongful imprisonment is eligible for group health insurance as if the person was a TDCJ employee.

HB 1028 by Phillips – allows a court to prohibit an offender sentenced to incarceration from contacting the crime victim or the victim's family members and permits a parole panel to consider whether the offender contacted the victim in violation of TDCJ policy or a court order.

HB 1205 by Turner – allows certain defendants to receive a combination of time credits toward the completion of their period of community supervision by earning a certificate, diploma or a degree, making certain payments or completing a rehabilitation program. The defendant's community supervision officer (CSO) must notify the court if one or more time credits allow or require the court to conduct a review of the defendant's community for possible early termination. On receipt of the notice from the CSO, the court must contact the defendant's attorney and then conduct the review to determine if the defendant is eligible for a reduction or termination of community supervision.

HB 1381 by Madden – allows a TDCJ employee, as designated by the warden, to accept civil service from a law enforcement official on behalf of an inmate.

HB 1770 by Madden – allows TDCJ to issue a payment for post-release housing of an offender only if the agency does not operate or contract for operation of a residential correctional facility in the county of an offender's legal residence. In certain circumstances TDCJ or the owner of a structure must provide notice of the proposed use of the structure and hold a public hearing on whether the use of the structure is appropriate.

HB 2004 by Bonnen – requires the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ) to sell approximately 2,200 acres at the Ramsey Unit in Brazoria County.

HB 2124 by Workman – returns responsibility for victim notification upon the acquittal of a defendant by reason of insanity from TDCJ's Victim Services Division to local authorities who have jurisdiction over the patient/defendant and possess the necessary victim information required to give notice.

HB 2624 by Sheffield – requires information about a defendant's military service to be included in a presentence investigation.

HB 2649 by Allen – allows a judge to award diligent participation credit for participation in a work, treatment, educational or vocational program to a defendant convicted of a state jail felony, in an amount not to exceed 20 percent of the original state jail felony sentence.

HB 2734 by Madden – requires as a condition of parole that an illegal alien released to the custody of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement leave the United States and not return by unlawful means.

HB 2735 by Madden – requires the Parole Division to issue a summons for a hearing before a parole panel, rather than an arrest warrant, to a parolee charged with an administrative violation of parole more than three years after having been placed on supervision. The parolee must not be serving a sentence for, nor previously been convicted of, an offense that would require sex offender registration and must not be on intensive or super-intensive supervision parole, be an

absconder, or have been determined to be a threat to public safety.

HB 2847 by Madden – allows a person operating a video conferencing (VTC) system to be present when a grand jury is conducting business, and allows punishment of that person if the proceedings of the grand jury are leaked. The bill also allows a peace officer to testify before a grand jury using closed circuit video. The bill also permits a plea of guilty or a waiver of rights may be taken through a closed circuit video conference, unless the defendant or district attorney objects, and allows courts to accept pleas made by incarcerated offenders in TDCJ by VTC, except for a defendant charged with a capital felony death penalty case. Prior to submitting a plea, the inmate must sign a waiver of jury trial before the plea is accepted.

HB 3384 by Madden – removes the provision allowing a previous conviction for a state jail felony offense to be used for enhancement purposes (in most cases). Punishment for a state jail felony offense may be enhanced to a third degree felony if it is shown at trial that the defendant has been twice previously convicted of a state jail felony.

SB 653 by Whitmire – abolishes the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC) and creates a transition team to assist in the formation of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, with all duties and statutory references to TYC and TJPC transferring to the new agency.

SB 880 by Whitmire – expands and clarifies the types of programs a community supervision and corrections department (CSCD) may operate to supervise individuals not under court-ordered supervision by adding pretrial services, bail, occupational driver's licenses and deep-lung breath analysis mechanisms. The bill also increases the administrative fee range from \$25 – \$40 per month to \$25 – \$60 per month.

SB 953 by Whitmire – permits a court that grants an occupational license to a person to require as a condition of that license periodic testing for alcohol or controlled substances if the person's license was previously suspended due to a DUI conviction. The court may also order the occupational licensee to submit to monitoring by a CSCD to verify compliance, pay an administrative fee and extend the period of supervision until the end of the suspension of the person's driver's license.

SB 1010 by Huffman – requires the attorney representing the state to give the victim, guardian of a victim or close relative of a deceased victim notice of the existence and terms of any plea bargain agreement. The bill also requires the court, prior to accepting a plea bargain agreement, to inquire whether the attorney representing the state has given the required notice.

SB 1522 by Hinojosa – requires the court to accept a plea from an incarcerated defendant by mail or secure electronic or facsimile transmission. Prior to accepting the plea, the court must verify that the person submitting the plea is the defendant named in the information or indictment or a person with legal authority to act for the defendant named in the information or the indictment.

SB 1681 by Ellis – clarifies certain procedures that judges and defense attorneys must follow when counsel is allowed to withdraw following a guilty plea or trial. The bill provides that the Fair Defense Act procedures for appointing attorneys, such as from a list in a fair manner, apply to appeals in criminal cases and to probation revocation hearings. The bill also grants any magistrate the authority to give warnings, such as the right to counsel, to persons arrested on motions to revoke probation. E

Aviso a Ofensores \$100 Cobro por Servicios Médicos

A partir de Septiembre 28, 2011, una nueva ley estatal entra en vigor que enmienda la Sección 501.063 del Código de Gobierno de Texas, y cambia la cantidad en la cuota que el Departamento de Justicia Criminal es requerido cobrar a cada ofensor quien solicita una visita al proveedor de servicios médicos.

A usted le será cobrada una cuota de \$100 por la primer visita al médico que usted solicite. Usted hace la petición llenando y enviando una forma Llamada de Enfermo (Sick Call) o pidiéndole a un empleado proporcionar asistencia para acceso a servicios médicos de rutina sin cita que no son de emergencia o peligran su vida.

Esta cuota será cobrada a su cuenta fondo de confianza. Si no hay suficiente dinero en su cuenta fondo de confianza, la ley requiere que el 50% de cada depósito a su cuenta fondo de confianza sea aplicado a la cantidad que usted adeuda hasta que la cantidad total es pagada.

A usted no se le cobrará por una visita de servicio médico que es por:

- Una emergencia o situación de vida en peligro;
- Continuación de servicios recomendado por el personal de cuidado médico;
- Cuidado crónico (incluyendo enfermedades transmisibles tales como VIH, SIDA y TB);
- Cuidado prenatal;
- Exámenes de salud y evaluaciones relacionados al proceso de diagnóstico y recepción; o,
- Servicios de cuidado médico necesarios para cumplir con las leyes y reglamentos Estatales.

A usted no le será negado servicio médico si usted no tiene dinero en su cuenta fondo de confianza para pagar la cuota. E

PROJECT continued from page 1

Offenders need to get a new Trust Fund Inquiry (TFI) to show they have been indigent for at least six months at that time.

Offenders who sent in a TFI this year and qualified for the program but did not get a fan because of a shortage of funds, will have their names on a priority list for the year 2012. Offenders should send a new TFI after Jan. 1, 2012, because each year is a separate program.

"If you received a fan, remember it's your property," said Dorothy Deen, fan project coordinator. "Take good care of the fan and property papers. Do not put tape or stickers on the fan or alter it in any way. An offender can receive only one fan through this special project."

Those who did get a fan from TX-CURE this year and would like to thank someone who gave money to buy fans may write a note expressing appreciation to: A Fan Donor: c/o TX-CURE Fan Project, P.O. Box 372, Burleson, Texas, 76097. Writers should tell the donor why they needed the fan and how the fan helped. Writers may sign their first name or "a grateful prisoner."

TX-CURE will send these thank you notes to each of the fund donors. E

Passover Seder Celebration



Participants in the Polunsky Passover Seder celebration are: (First row) R. Hinchey, M. Missick, P. Missick, K. Hughes and K. Miller; (Second row) P. Espinosa, J.C. Godoy, J. Thurman, S. Gonzalez and G. Porter.

By Kevin Hargrove
Polunsky Unit

The Polunsky Unit's Messianic Community celebrated its first Passover Seder Celebration. The unit's Messianic Community consists of several Messianic groups including Messianic Jewish, Messianic Christian, Messianic Israelite, Sabbath Keepers and United Church of God.

The Polunsky Unit is one of the

first units to have a Messianic Community within TDCJ. This community is sponsored by the King of Saints Tabernacle from Cleveland, Texas. Pastor Missick and his wife facilitate the service and also host "The Trump of Zion" radio show on station 100.7 FM on Sundays at 4:30 p.m.

For more information regarding the Messianic Community, contact the unit Chaplaincy Department. E

Estelle Unit hosts peer education conference

By James Carter
Estelle Unit

The Estelle Unit hosted the 2011 Peer Education conference in April. Fourteen units of the Central Region were represented. Allen Barrett of the AIDS Foundation, Houston, introduced the guests who included Mike Trainum with the Foundation For Indigenous Languages; Dr. Kate Hendricks, chief public health officer; Cassandra McGilbra from the TDCJ Safe Prisons office; Dianna Langley, the state Peer Education coordinator and Oscar Mendoza, deputy director for TDCJ.

Objectives of the conference were:

- to increase basic knowledge regarding HIV/STI transmission, risk reduction, prevention, and treatment;
- to positively change attitudes and beliefs regarding self-perceived risks of HIV/STI transmission;
- to improve knowledge regarding community access to HIV/STI prevention and care services; and
- to improve existing skill sets regarding Peer Education content, practice and delivery.

Questions pertaining to the Wall Talk or Safe Prisons curriculum can be asked of unit peer educators. E

Daniel Unit awards refrigeration certifications

By Justin North
Daniel Unit Reporter

Four men on the Price Daniel Unit recently received certifications from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for completion of refrigeration training. Jon Lester, Arthur Lucero, James Dunaway and Curtis Robbins achieved certification after passing a four-part written examination administered by the EPA. By passing all four parts of the exam, the men are now licensed to work with all types of refrigeration equipment. This certifi-

cation will hopefully assist these men to secure jobs after release due to the high demand for refrigeration technicians. All the men wish to express their gratitude to Mr. White and Mr. Moffett in the Daniel Unit Maintenance Department for helping make it possible for them to receive licensing. They also want to give a special thanks to Senior Warden S. Swift and Assistant Warden J. Smith for allowing EPA officials to come and administer the exam. E

Smith Unit hosts Kairos

By Craig Whitley
Smith Unit Reporter

Recently a Kairos walk was conducted on the Preston E. Smith Unit. It was unique in that it was the first one conducted by the Kairos Prison Ministry in which all 42 candidates in the Kairos program were from G4 medium custody.

Outside Rector A. Dicky had some new challenges as he had to be more aware of possible security precautions when dealing with G4 offenders.

As the outside members started giving their talks and testimonies about God's presence in their everyday lives, the men started truly seeing God's hand in people's lives. J. Bennett was giving a testimony of how that morning started as he and his wife and five-year-old son were waking up. He said Blake came running around the corner and said loudly, "Dad, you weren't gonna wake me up!"

"That's what I was just coming to do," Justin replied, to which Blake responded, "You know we gotta go to Kairos to tell these men about Jesus!"

After Justin finished his talk, you could tell that the men could see that if this man's five-year-old son knew about God's love through this ministry, then there must be something to it.

It took longer than normal for the men to begin to let their walls down, but by the fourth day, many had accepted Christ.

On the follow-up weekend, 39 of the 42 men showed up and were truly showing signs of change in their lives. They are being allowed to go to the prayer and share groups with minimum custody offenders and participate in the reunion weekends. E

Small engine repair class taught at Telford

By Beau Gillis
Telford Unit

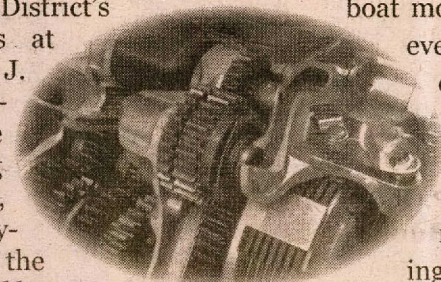
Windham School District's small engine class at Telford is taught by J. Lewis, a lifetime mechanic with a wide variety of training involving watercraft, ATVs and motorcycles. Students said the class is "fun work and learning all at the same time."

When people think of small engines, they automatically think of lawn mowers and lawn equipment.

However, small engines include jet skis, 4-wheelers, dirt bikes, go-carts, boat motors, golf carts and even street motorcycles.

Lewis knows his trade and maintains a well-mannered class, according to students.

Lewis quizzes and tests the class regularly, and students learn to work together as a team, with safety as a priority. E



Reconciler weekend encourages offenders to change lives

By James Carter
Estelle Unit Reporter

The Estelle Unit received a visit earlier this year from Big Dog, Turtle and 21 Reconciler brothers and sisters as Jerry and Tommie Hatfield brought the Reconciler Motorcycle Ministry to visit. They brought food, music and testimony.

The group shared with the gathered crowd a message of pain, tragedy and change. Jerry's first words on Friday evening were: "Expect to be touched." They brought reconciliation, which means to "bring back together." One thing that all Reconciler brothers and sisters have in common is they are normal people who love to serve the Lord. They

taught about perseverance as well as the prison outside of the bars and razor wire—"the prison that is ourselves."

Several speakers gave their testimonies focusing on God's love and warning us to never give up. The afternoon session concluded with a tour of the motorcycles. Saturday night, the Reconcilers' band played, and the crowd was entertained by the "cousins of ZZ Top"—who went by the humorous name of "ZZ Bottom."

The Estelle Unit thanks the warden and the security staff for their efforts toward making this event happen. ε

ECHO requests submissions

The ECHO attempts to reflect positive values to fulfill the expectations you have placed on our prison newspaper. We request that **YOU** consider writing quality articles, commentaries, etc., to be published. All submitted articles will be appreciated and considered.

Please do not send anything more than 1,000 words (five pages handwritten, or three pages typed double-spaced). Publication is not guaranteed, and it may take a few issues for an article to appear.

Suggestions:

Submissions	Description
Article	An article is an objective discussion in an informative manner on any number of topics, such as health, history or legal issues. New and detailed facts need to have cited sources.
Commentary	A commentary is a discussion of any number of topics, but it is based upon the opinions or experiences of the writer.
Book Review	A book review details the subject, style and key plot elements of the book and generally concerns relevant topics of the day. Opinions about the book are welcomed.
Extras	Extras refer to letters to the editor, letters to Darby, puzzles, recipes and short stories, to name a few.
Poetry	Poetry is a piece of writing chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound and/or rhythm. (<i>The ECHO</i> already has more than 100 poems approved for publication and always has an abundance of poetry submitted, but if you have a really great poem, go ahead and send it.)
Unit Report	A unit report discusses activities performed on a particular unit and is submitted by unit reporters only . The report must be submitted on the "Article for <i>The ECHO</i> form" with the proper signatures.

When submitting any of the above, write a heading at the top of the first page with your name, number, unit of assignment and the type of submission you are sending. For example:

John Doe, #1234567
Huntsville Unit
Letter to the Editor (or article, poem, etc.)

Don't hesitate to send us your work — even if you are not a professional writer. We will edit your submissions for clarity and effectiveness.

Thank you for your continued support of *The ECHO*. ε

SUDOKU

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Difficult

Employment for offender drivers: tractor trailer truck

For consideration to drive a tractor trailer truck, an offender must have the following:

1. Commercial driver's license (CDL): class A or B.
2. Must be G1, OT or S2 classification.
3. Must have an eligible DPS driving record through the Texas Motor Vehicle Registration (MVR) department.

Interested offenders should send an I-60 that includes their name, TDCJ number, current job assignment and driver's license number to:

Freight Transportation
BOT Headquarters
Huntsville, Texas

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Ombudsman

In 2007, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Ombudsman was established by the 80th Legislature (Texas Government Code §§501.171- .178) and was appointed by the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ). The PREA Ombudsman provides offenders, family and friends of offenders and the general public an independent office to report sexual assaults occurring in Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) correctional facilities, and to ensure the impartial resolution of complaints of allegations of sexual assault. The PREA Ombudsman reports directly to the TBCJ chairman and may be contacted at the following address:

PREA Ombudsman
P.O. Box 99
Huntsville, Texas 77342

Due to the serious nature of sexual assaults, and in accordance with TDCJ policy on "Zero-Tolerance" against sexual assaults, offenders knowledgeable of an offender-on-offender or staff-on-offender sexual assault that occurs within a TDCJ correctional facility are encouraged to immediately report the allegation to the facility administration or the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). ε

Color blind

By Von Sossamon
Goodman Unit

Recently, as our dorm walked into the chow hall, a fight broke out. A correctional officer emptied his can of pepper spray, and the chow hall was evacuated so it could be decontaminated. We were locked up in the yard while the COs sorted things out. As I walked around, I noticed the offenders had broken into "color-coordinated" groups. This really surprised me. Our dorm, for the most part, mingles pretty well. Most of us get along and are willing to help others, regardless of skin tone.

In 2008, I watched in awe as we elected Amer-

ica's first black president. I thought about how far we had come since the tragedy of slavery nearly ripped our country apart! I was proud of that progress and the other achievements we have made in realizing all men and women are created equal. Society at large has grasped that and is much better because of it. It is a shame that prison society hasn't caught on yet.

The saddest part is that we prisoners have a lot of forces against us. The public fears us, so they want us locked away forever. Businesses won't hire us. We can't vote. The only ones who really understand what that is like are other

inmates. We should be working together. We should be encouraging each other and helping each other to succeed. With all of the things working against us, do we really need to work against each other? It was discouraging for me to see the division on that yard.

A few hours later, we finally got to eat, get our necessities and get back to the dorm. By the next day, our dorm was back to "normal." Or as normal as prison gets, anyway. So maybe there is hope for us after all. Maybe we can have solidarity. Maybe we can become color blind. For all of our sakes, I hope so. E

Wynne Unit presents something different

Staff Report

Offenders on the Wynne Unit were recently treated to *something different*. At least that was how it was billed on the poster that was put up in dayrooms across the unit. I suppose it is a little different when the chaplaincy department sponsors a program that features educators.

The program consisted of two speakers. The first was the president of the Dallas chapter of the NAACP, Dr. Juanita Wallace. Dr. Wallace spoke about passion.

"What gives you that feeling of excellence?" she asked the gathering. She went on to assert that "your passion has to be something you know for a fact that God has given you." This particular comment no doubt resonated with the hosts of the program, chaplains Page and Shabazz, who were seated in the audience.

Dr. Wallace told the group that, while she once picked cotton, she currently holds a Ph.D. in philosophy. She is serving her second term as president of the Dallas NAACP chapter, and she told the offenders in attendance "You are here [in prison], but it's not you!" She also provided a little information pertaining to the NAACP. For instance, the organization has 12,200 units nationwide, including several prison branches. Her advice to those of us in white was to take full advantage of whatever educational opportunities we have at our disposal.

Dr. Wallace's ended her remarks with a poem by William Ernest Henley entitled *Invictus*, which concluded with the famous lines, "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul."

The next speaker was Dr. Jerry Chambers, an educator who'd served four decades teaching in Dallas. Dr. Chambers began his teaching career in 1964 and taught in the first black high school in Dallas. He was in Washington, D.C., in 1968, when Dr. Martin Luther King gave his historical speech about "the mountaintop." Indeed, Dr. Chambers recited a large portion of this speech during his remarks.

Chambers advised his audience to "listen to the beat of a different drummer." He exhorted the group to remain hopeful and take advantage of educational opportunities.

"Knowledge is the key to power and power is the key to progress," he said.

It was indeed an honor to have heard these two outstanding scholars. As attendees filed out of the Wynne Unit's Rockwell Chapel that Saturday afternoon, there is little doubt that they all realized they had just taken part in an event that was truly *something different*. E

Polunsky Unit hosts Bill Glass Champions



Offenders G. Holmes and B. Cagle assisting J. Henderson.

By Kevin Hargrove
Polunsky Unit Reporter

The Polunsky Unit hosted the Bill Glass Ministry Champions Event on March 4-5. The throb and roars of motorcycles entering the rec yards set the tone for an exciting event. From the tight-rope walker to professional athletes, singers and musicians, the two-day event provided awesome inspiration, encouragement and entertainment.

The Bill Glass Ministry is a Christian-based organization that reaches out to inmates in prisons throughout the country. Their purpose is to encourage prisoners to be great men of faith. Even with today's economic crisis, more than 100 of the Bill Glass Ministry team members spent their own personal funds to travel from all over the country to get to Livingston, Texas.

"I'm here to remind you that you are men that we need free out there," said Darlene Bart, one of the team's musicians and singers. "They say that real men don't cry, but women say that only men that feel and cry are real men. I do this because the God I serve told me to do this."

Not one inmate was forgotten. Team members were allowed to go to every building on the unit, including close custody and death row. Team members provided great encouragement to the inmates.

"I am happy to be able to come here and participate in this ministry," said team member James Henderson, a five-time national and world power lifting champion. "I am here to tell you that you

never know when God is going to show up, so practice today for what you want for tomorrow so you can have a fresh new start."

"They used to say 'here comes trouble' when they saw me coming because I was an extremely violent person," said team member Jonathan "Jonnie" Spinx, a professional kick boxer with an undefeated record. "I am grateful to be able to come here and fellowship with you all. This is not about me, it's about you getting your life where it needs to be."

"It ain't about me," repeated team member Devin Wyman, defensive tackle for the New York Giants. "It's about what's burning inside of me, and that is to speak about the grace of God. I encourage you to have faith and hold on to your visions and remember this: Winners always look at what they're going to; losers look at what they're going through."

Tightrope walker Tino Wallenda performed several tricks while suspended over 30 feet in the air. Strongman James Henderson inspired the audience by ripping telephone books by hand. Professional UFC fighter Justin "The Viking" Wren, with offender G. Cavazos as assistant, totally captivated the audience by demonstrating his signature fighting and submission technique.

This was a truly memorable event, and offenders on the Polunsky Unit will be looking forward to the return of the Bill Glass Ministry. Offenders who want more information regarding the Bill Glass Ministry coming to their unit should send an I-60 to the unit chaplain. E

Vance Unit InnerChange Program hosts Day With Dad

By Michael Rainville
Vance Unit

It's as though they cancelled prison for a day. Kids' laughter rings out across the rec yard. From tykes to teenagers, the children of incarcerated men romp and giggle for hours inside the wire. We dads get to feel human again.

Prison Fellowship sponsors this day-long event one day every May through its InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI) program at the Carol Vance Unit near Sugarland. IFI calls it Day With Dad. Kids as well as moms or guardians get to spend the entire day on the unit with their dads. It's a day so alien to the prison experience that it seems almost like being on another planet.

The chapel and rec yard become a playground complete with giant hand-painted posters covering the walls inside and an inflatable jump house outside. IFI furnishes everything for a fun day with dad, including games and all the hot dogs a hungry kid (or dad) can eat. We play volleyball, football, basketball, handball, horseshoes and ring-the-bell.

The most popular activity is dunk-the-director. Tommie Dorsett, IFI's program director, gets a dunking every time a sure-shot youngster hits the target on the water tank. There is face-painting, bubble-blowing, balloons and



bracelets. Everyone gets to eat and drink all they can hold from concession stands stocked with popcorn, chili dogs, snow cones and lemonade.

The whole point, of course, is the precious time dads get with their youngsters. I've been gone since my youngest son Braden, now six years old, was an infant. This was the first time I've ever been able to play with him. At first, I was reluctant to rough-house with my sons, but a friendly game of catch quickly turned into tackle football when

Braden said, "Hey Dad, I want to play *real* football." Our football game quickly turned into a dog-pile wrestling match. It was an awesome bonding experience for all of us!

Every father in prison is painfully aware that we are not permitted to get down on the floor and play with our kids at visitation, so this was truly a blessing. Seeing children playing, laughing and running around the rec yard lifted me right out of the prison atmosphere for one day.

The celebration ended with families gathering to pray as they said their goodbyes with hugs, kisses and tears. For a week after the event, the atmosphere on the unit was at an all-time high. Even those who didn't participate seemed more joyful and relaxed. We who attended can't wait to do it again and the kids are already looking forward to another Day With Dad next year!

Clements Unit graduates first apologetics class

Wylie Bone
Clements Unit Reporter

The Bill Clements Unit Chaplaincy department graduated 20 men in its first Christian Apologetics class last spring. The 24-week program was sponsored by Biola University of La Miranda, Ca.

Christian Apologetics is a course study that teaches students how to defend or describe their faith and has no specific denominational focus. Apologetics in the free-world continues to grow in many churches as a tool for learning a faith or explaining it to those who do not believe. In the modern world, whatever your belief system may be, simply telling an uninformed person to "believe something just because you should" has little impact. This particular course includes lectures from numerous experts in the fields of Christian history, philosophy and science. The purpose of this class is to equip people with reasoned arguments for the existence of God and the Christian faith.

The diligence of volunteer chaplain J. Rowland in facilitating the class is much appreciated, and the idea to bring this program to Clements started with offender Jon Warnshuis. Offender Warnshuis coordinated with staff Chaplain D. Moore who was able to organize the program which now has a second class halfway to completion. Anyone interested in starting a similar program at your unit should contact the unit chaplaincy department, and then Biola University c/o: Christian Apologetics, 13800 Biola Avenue, La Miranda, CA 90639.

Graduates include: Ricky Abeyta, Jose Arellano, Greg Bruner, Sergai Daigre, Dan Griffin, Richard Lara, Michael Lee, Roy Linder, Robert Meek, Martin Moses, Raul Ontiveros, Robert Owens, David Reazola, Tom Regan, D. B. Smith, Matthew Tate, Jon Warshuis, Carroll Wilson, Hartwell Wilson and Joseph Woods.

Ramsey Veterans Incarcerated Group hosts the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition

By Paresh Patel
Ramsey Unit Reporter

In their efforts to assist veterans, the Ramsey Veterans Incarcerated Group invited members of Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC) to its monthly meeting. TCJC is committed to identifying and advancing real solutions to the problems facing Texas' juvenile and criminal justice systems. They provide policy research and analysis, effective partnerships and educate key stakeholders to promote effective management, accountability and best practices that increase public safety and preserve human and civil rights.

TCJC does not provide legal advice or representation but can offer offenders and their families informa-

tion about legislation impacting Texas prisoners, relevant policy changes and guidance about specific resources that may provide direct assistance to offenders.

Ana Yanez-Correa is the TCJC Director. Erica Surprenant works on civil rights issues and is the Special Project Director and Director of Inmate Correspondence. She thanked the veterans for their service and revealed that her father served in Vietnam and her grandfather served in World War II. While researching and interviewing for her doctorate in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), in particular how it affected criminal behavior, she realized that incarcerated veterans were being overlooked and often go untreated for PTSD. She decided

that she would be part of the change and joined TCJC. She presented her research to policymakers in which 25 incarcerated veterans had participated. Her efforts hopefully will provide health care and counseling for some of those in need.

Accompanying Erica was Leah Pinney, who works with the indigent part of TCJC and manages the business aspect of the group. She explained that most of TCJC funding is from foundation grants and private donations. The fourth member of their team was Travis Leete, an attorney, who serves as a policy analyst. He stated he has a brother serving in Iraq.

As they fielded a variety of questions for over an hour, it became evi-

dent that TCJC is driven by passion for service and justice. They have six paid personnel and four volunteers, all based in Austin. TCJC has also compiled a resource guidebook that is available at unit law libraries. For those offenders who are about to re-enter society, TCJC has published this guidebook that is city specific and provides information and resources available to ex-offenders. For more information, you or your family can contact:

Texas Criminal Justice Coalition
510 S. Congress Avenue, Suite 206
Austin, TX 78704

(512) 441-8123

www.criminaljusticecoalition.org

The icicles of my heart

Submitted by Rebecca Seiber
Mountain View Unit

The sun sparkled off
the icicles of my heart,

And meeting you
made it possible
for them to melt.

Little did I know
you were deceiving me
from the start,

And I lost
all the warmth
that I had felt.

The icicles are jagged,
cold and sharp.

They tear into me
with each breath I take.

The blinding pain
now diverts my heart.

I cannot see you

until it's way too late.

Now you have entered
into my frosty forest.

Nothing but cold darkness
holds you tight.

Your path soon becomes
the very poorest

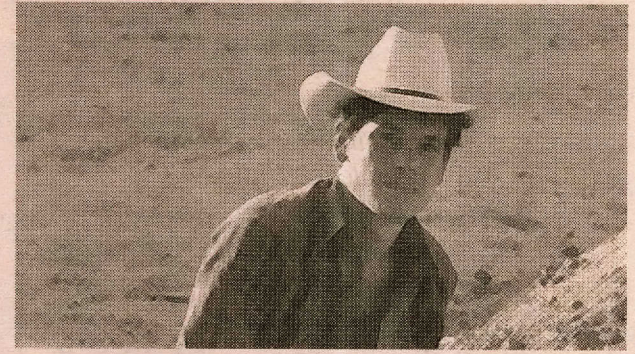
You can no longer see
for the darkness of night.

All you have left
is the very warm memory.

Remember the sparkles
of light in my heart?

How cold they were
before you met me?

They are back
once again,
never to depart.



A real man

Submitted by C.W. Elliot
Wynne Unit

Now that you're turning twenty-one, I'm sure
you understand
That, chronologically,
the world now views you as a man.
Since most maintain their own concept of what
a man should be,
Perhaps it's time you understand
what that word means to me.
Contrary to what twenty-one-year-olds today
might think,

No one becomes a man
because the law says he can drink.

It's not expected you'll have
financial security.

And these days,
not many expect sexual purity.
Very few twenty-one-year-olds

have chosen a vocation.

And even fewer at that age
have their own habitation.

It isn't my intent, though,
to say what a man is not.

So here are some traits that real men today
should display a lot.

The Internet has made the world
a cultural buffet.

Tolerance, therefore, is a thing
that real men must convey..

Gender roles at work and home
have gotten pretty gray.

So caring for their children
real men must do every day.

And contrary to what
many Neanderthals perceive,
Gender equality's a thing
that all real men believe.

But surely the most critical
manhood prerequisite
Is setting goals and making sure
that, to them, you commit.

Some other things are used
to take the measure of a man.

And if you let me,
I will teach all of them I can.

For now, however, let me close
by citing just this one:
Real men take every chance they get
to say, "I love you, son."

The Hustlin' Spyda

Submitted by Billy Wayne Williams
Beto Unit



This is the story of the
"Hustlin' Spyda"

Who was always on the
move, trying to be a family
provider.

But the money got good, and
so did the drugs;

Always having to avoid the
police and also the thugs.

One day the Hustlin' Spyda
decided on a muscle move.

He didn't need the money, he
just had something to prove.

But it didn't go right, and the
Hustlin' Spyda went to jail.

He was left in a 6x9 cell with
an amazing story to tell.

He hustled all his life, since
he was a kid.

But it slowed him down when
he got his prison bid.

It might not have been much,
but he did leave his family.

Now he's got to put up with a
lot of animosity.

Because of the strife that he's
put in his life,

He decided on being a father
to his kids and to find a wife.

He wants you to know that if
you're an all-nighter,

You might wind up being
cellies with the Hustlin'
Spyda!

Confused thinking

Submitted by Anonymous
Montford Unit

I'm really confused
My body won't move.

You would know

If you walked in my shoes.

I try to explain,

I try to maintain.

Then again it came.

I went back to jail.

Once again, I failed.

I can't get bail.

I'm lonely in my cell.

The world passes by.

I break down and cry.

I'm locked in a cage.

I'm feeling enraged.

Mom is crying at home.

She's feeling alone.

Eyes often stop blinking.

It's God that I'm seeking.

I'm not wishing, I'm dreaming.

But I'm wrong again.

It's just confused thinking!

Jessica

Submitted by Timothy James Jordan
Powledge Unit

I am the father
she never really knew,
I cheated her out of love,
just what addicts do.
They never fully realize
the hurt they leave inside,
They never feel the lonely tears
they have cried.

Then one day
the father finds his knees,
"Oh, my God, what have I done,
Lord forgive me please..."

The daughter has grown
children of her own.

She's still afraid
of being hurt again.

Now the father is old
and realizes how cold

His lack of love
for her has been...

When the cold wind blows,
it shivers the soul.

My Jessica may never know

That her father loves her
and always will

Even when life is over and I go.

I love you, Jessica.
Dad.

Another day

Submitted by Samantha McCallister
Woodman Unit

Shackles around my feet
Even a convict can't take
this much heat.

Grey and white is all I see.

In this 6x9
I begin to discover me

Was once lost
in a dark world,
drowning in pain.

Reality,
grabbing me by the throat.
Screaming are you insane?

We all have a story
that eventually unfolds.

Fighting the demons
for the souls we have sold.

Sleep with one eye open,
barely sleep at all.

Pick up the phone,
but who will ever
accept your call?

Ones who stood behind you
have slowly faded away.

So much time to think,

but so little left to say.
Few know their out dates
for when they will leave.

Others have their faith
in God to believe.

Spiritually inclined
but seeking the light.

Struggling with darkness,
putting up a fight.

Doors slam, lights dim.
Awaiting another day

to pay for our sins.



Feelings

Submitted by Eric L. Mapps
Ft. Stockton Unit

You know my other side,
I can no longer hide

These feelings that I feel
manifesting inside.

As my time here
draws to an end,

My patience
is wax-paper thin.

Negative thoughts
enter into my head.

Is there still virtue?
Is there still reason
to feel sad?

Even with the visions,
I give it all to God.

Even with the discouragement,
I must not lose heart.

Even in my circumstance,
I continue

To stay totally committed
and faithful to only one.

By God's grace,
it's what I chose to do.

So here I stand
as the days drift by.

I gaze into the sky,
Watching the clouds roll,
And inside I feel so cold.

Tears

Submitted by Ivan Ray Benson
Robertson Unit

As I sit here
and ponder my life,

I pose a question to myself
and ask, "Why?"

How could I ever leave
the only one
that meant something;

My beautiful little butterfly.

The tears begin to flow
and I can't help but to cry.

While the noiseless feet
of time march on,

The reflections in my mind

continue to somersault backwards,

Back to something
that was truly beautiful;

Seasons that have now gone by.

To an image of love when it was real
and the truth wasn't a lie.

It's in these fleeting thoughts
that cascade through my brain,

Assuring me they are real
and that I am not insane.

Flowing like a waterfall,
mingling with tears
that fall like the rain.

Animosity that springs forth
from a broken heart,

Telling a different story
with each and every tear;

From a soul
that has been torn apart.

Tears from fears,
a river of months
that flow into years;

Thoughts of love lost
that I reflect on while
I navigate and steer

Through this storm of tears.

Why, hypocrite?

By Mitchell Mavoides
Robertson Unit

“Hypocrisy – n. behavior in which a person pretends to have higher standards than is the case. Origin Greek ‘hupokrisis’, ‘acting of a theatrical part.’ (Source: Oxford Dictionary of Current English fourth ed.)

That is what hypocrisy is; when we act like we hold to an ethic we really don't practice. How often do we see it in here?

How about when we see a bully on the wing take something from a little guy and gloat about it? Then he gets shaken down by the officers and cries to high heaven about the injustice of them taking something he wasn't even supposed to have. He wants his right to private property respected, but he doesn't respect that with others' valuables. Why?

The hypocrisy we have all seen in here like that—about rights—has gotten on all our nerves at least once or twice. Let me put emphasis on us in white for a moment, because how we acted is how we got here. To make it simple, when you violate others' rights, you forfeit your own. That's why we're in prison—we've all done this to some degree. Many of us still don't get it. Why are these rights to be respected?

“Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” We have all heard of these rights. Why do we have them? Most prisoners—myself included for a while—really don't know. As I've found out, they are necessary for people to live and thrive in a free society. Prison culture has predictably and ignorantly reversed them.

Life is the essential right. Human life is of irreplaceable value, each one precious and unique. But in the prison culture, many think a human's life is worthless and have the skulls, demons and degraded imagery tattooed on them to prove it. “A dozen lives for a dime” is the view. Why?

Liberty is the freedom to say what you will (as long as you aren't threatening others) and think what you want. These two freedoms lead to critical analysis, discussions and innovations. They make life better by making it more open to reason. But in prison, certain tyrannical inmates want to si-

lence others if the person says something the other doesn't like. He displays his wounded pride and, in the name of respect, he is ready to fight. Can't he use words to deal with it like a rational person would?

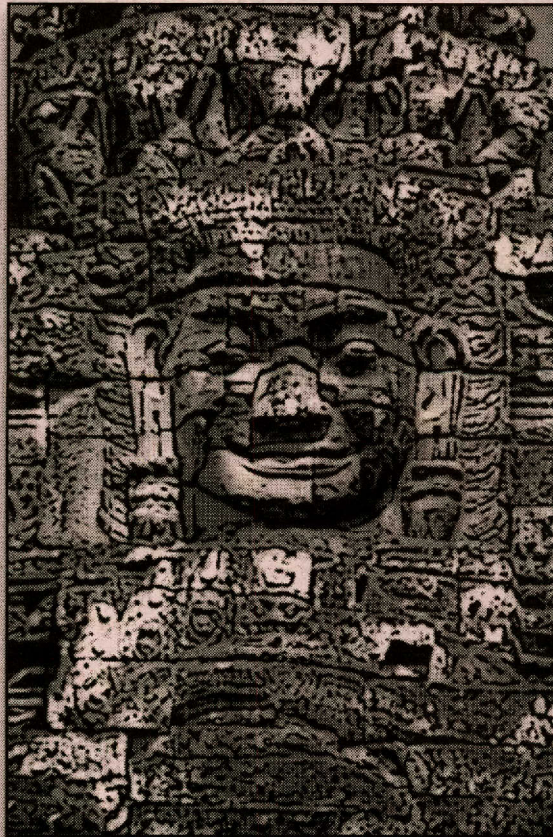
The pursuit of happiness, as I understand it, is the right to follow the work you enjoy, to earn the values you need to live and to achieve happiness by reaching your goals. But inside these walls, some think being a “jacker” is a legitimate job. Let's be real; being a robber isn't a real job. If you think it is, then your rights will continue to be taken away. If we can think, use our hands and produce goods, then why do we have a robber attitude when it comes to other people's things—the things others have worked hard for?

I know rights are limited these days—especially in prison. We need to understand that these rights stem from aspects of human nature; from man as a thinking, feeling, productive human being. The founding fathers of our country thought them so obvious that they called them “self-evident” in the Declaration of Independence.

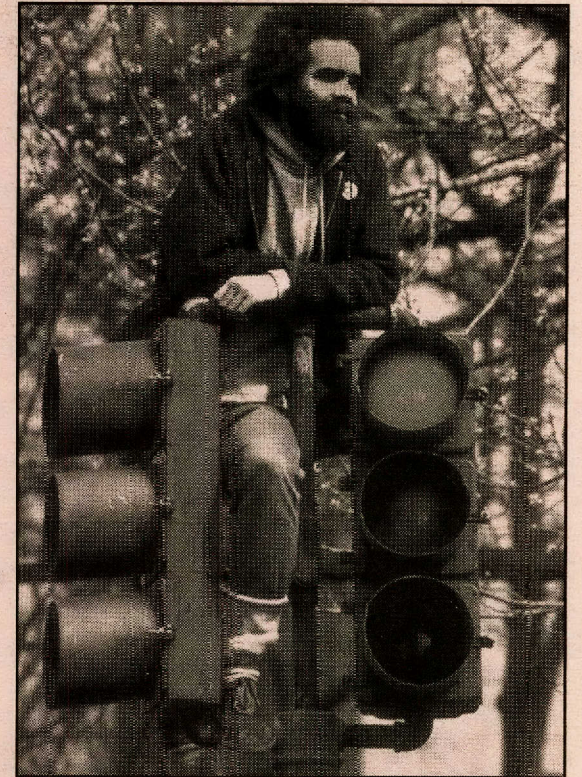
We need to stop being hypocrites and respect the rights of other people. Forget the prison culture because, if we don't, we will continue to sabotage ourselves. We need to flush the “survival of the fittest” mentality, and then maybe we won't come back.

We aren't living in the Old West anymore, despite how much I've heard about the desire to return to it. We don't live in a society of men forming gangs for mutual protection, of lynch-mob justice or six-gun showdowns in the street at high noon. We live in a society of individual rights and freedoms that deserve to be respected. Fact-based courts should pass judgment and settle disputes instead of fists and gun muzzles.

Let's face reality: we must respect each other in the real way—by respecting each other's rights. Regardless of whether it is a big, strong warrior, a physically weak guy, a woman, or a child, we all have the right to live free. If you can't agree with that, for whatever reason, you'll hear the iron doors slam. Don't ask yourself, “Why?” because you know why. E



What are we?



By Steven “Dutch” Waller
Boyd Unit

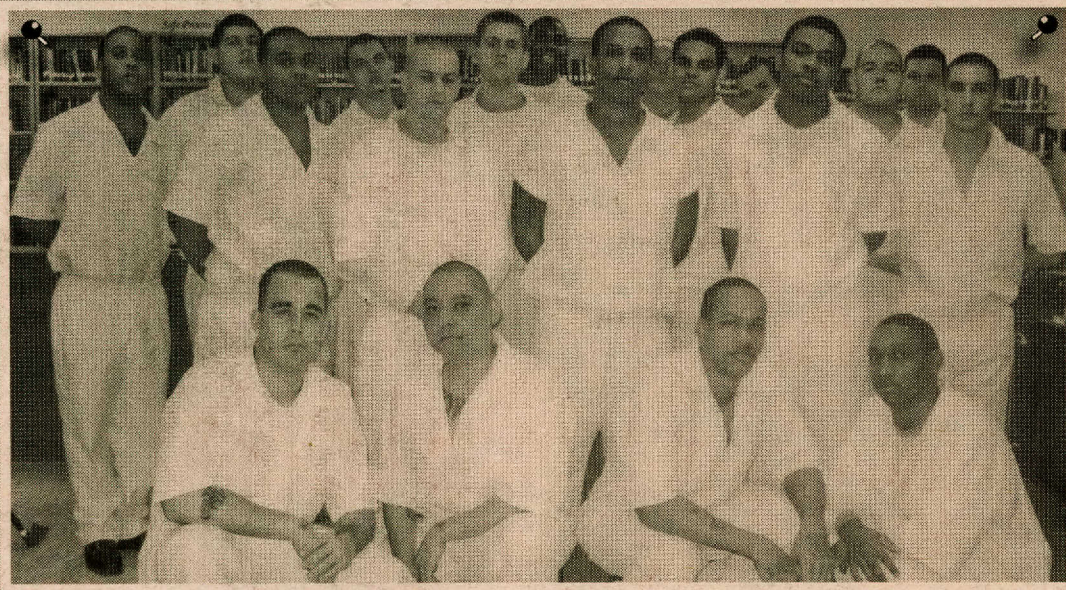
What is it that shapes a man's life? Is it heredity? Is it his environment? Or is it some unknown element produced by a certain time or place and conditions that will shape a man to meet it?

A change in a man is never so evident to himself, but of course we experience new things daily. Even as a man will shape something with his hands, he's also shaping himself. A man has in himself a material that can be shaped into anything he wishes to be. The problem of this is that the shaping never ceases, and sometimes we get carried away and go too far in one direction before we realize it was the wrong direction.

We start out in life with the best of intentions, but the best intentions in the world get a man nowhere unless he knows how to get results and can enlist the cooperation of others. Cooperation means that we must compromise. Compromise is not a dirty word. In fact, it's the cornerstone of civilization, just as politics is the art of making civilization work. Those men who are not willing to compromise are unwise and are left standing alone with their own principles and values. Meanwhile, other men adjust their differences and move on.

Sometimes we, as men, have dreams and expectations. We ourselves are not ready for those dreams, and we must grow to meet them. What we want out of the world, we feel ourselves able to get. The problem is shaping the raw material that is within ourselves; shaping our strengths, our weaknesses and our way of thinking into the final product we can all respect. E

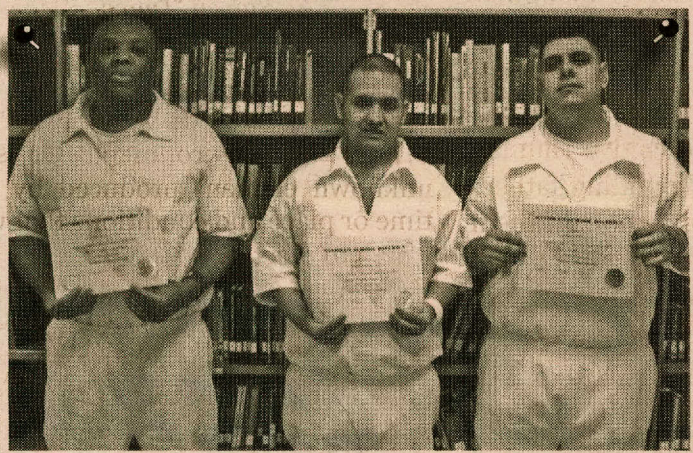
TDCJ/Windham bulletin board



Gurney Unit GED graduates are P. Calhoun, K.Crockett, P.Deenny, F. Escobar, S. Hernandez, J. Kelson, J. Massey, Valedictorian, M. McCleary, Salutatorian, N. Milberry, B. Miller, V. Richeffi, C. Sifuentes, K. Spivey, L. Thorn, T. Tucker, L. Williams, D. Asher, P. Callahan, G. Dixon, A. Everidge and S. Harper.



Mountain View Unit volleyball tournament third place winners are D. Jenkins, L. Castro, S. Hodges, V. Ascencio and J. Toon.



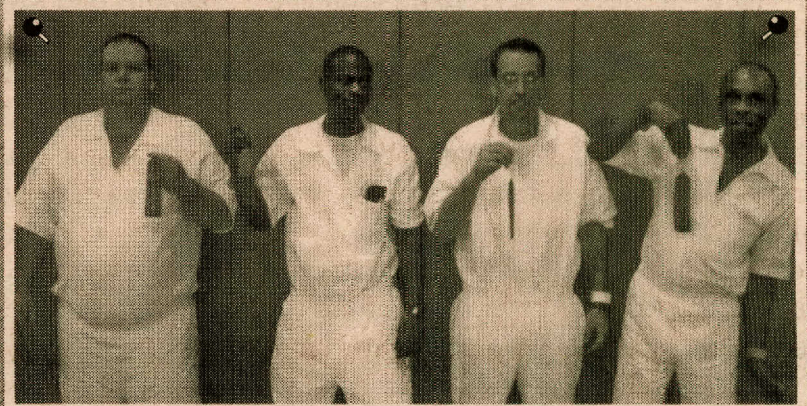
Wallace Unit Construction Carpentry graduates are B. Steptoe, A. Perez and J. Zambrano.



Estelle Unit GED graduates are J. McGrady, N. Wickware, C. Hervey, J. Pierce, C. Butler, R. McMullen, J. Love, I. Alearaz, J. Mays and J. Martinez.



Darrington Unit Trusty Camp Bridges to Life graduates are N. Acevedo, A. Alexander, M. Beasley, J. Booker, I. Brown, J. Brown, V. Contreras, K. Dixon, H. Durham, K. Fraiser, R. Freeman, G. Fulcher, T. Gibson, M. Griggs, D. Hunt, K. Hunter, S. James, Jr., C. Morales, J. Mose, R. Perales, D. Perez, J. Sanchez, A. Small, J. Stegall, K. Taylor, R. Thomas, A. Tillis, N. Washington, J. West, J. Wilkerson and M. Williams.



Neal Unit "Big Six" domino tournament winners are J. Jordan and I. Fountain, with the runner up team of S. Lyons and K. Brown.

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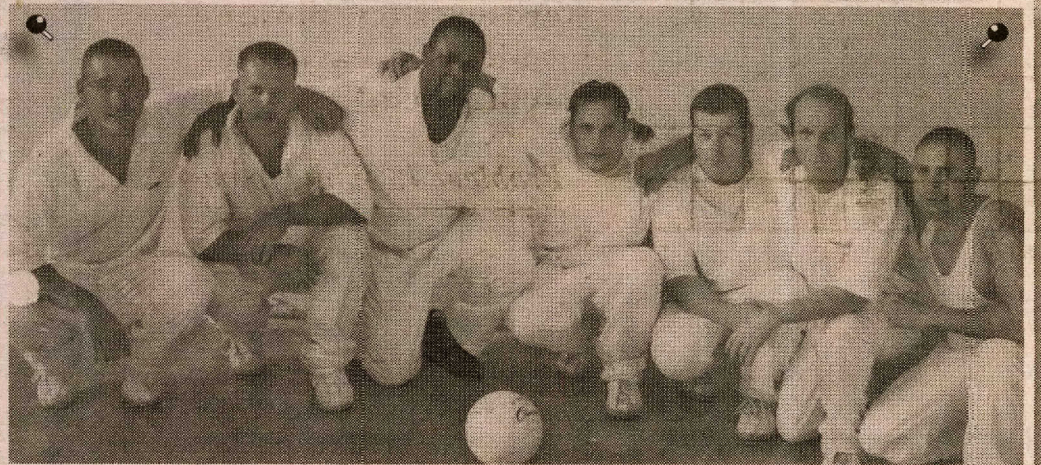
Crain Unit Riverside Campus CIP graduates are A. Harper, K. Porter, L. Ducworth, L. Schulte, A. Barrajas, B. Meshell, J. Belcher, L. Barnes, C. McDowell, S. Beshirs, S. Gremillion, K. Herring, D. Lindoff, D. Moore, M. Villa, D. Youngblood, S. Hampton, A. Bates and J. Moss.



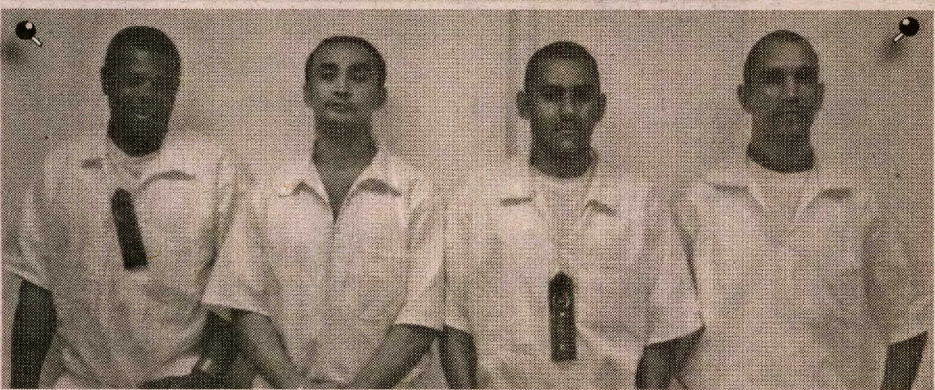
Mountain View Unit volleyball tournament second place winners are R. Wafer, T. Loffton, J. Aguinaga, S. Burns, L. Bohannon, E. Sanchez and W. Ellis.



Mountain View Unit volleyball tournament first place winners are O. Lumbi, Y. Sheffield, C. Casas, N. Salazar, D. Toney, A. Corona, C. Smith, C. Williams and K. Robinson.



Coffield Unit volleyball tournament winners are C. Crow, M. Mallinger, J. Bowman, H. Buckner, T. Townley, D. Grizzell and J. Hernandez. Not pictured are A. Pope and S. Ragan.



Clements Unit handball tournament winners are R. Sneed, R. Cahvariaga, E. Guzman and H. Zepeda. Not pictured are A. Gomez and T. Smith.



Clemens Unit computer science graduates are S. Helgerson, C. Williams, D. Golden, F. Barrera, G. Contreras, M. Grant, A. Fangman, E. Vanscoy and J. Adams.

Crespo's chess corner

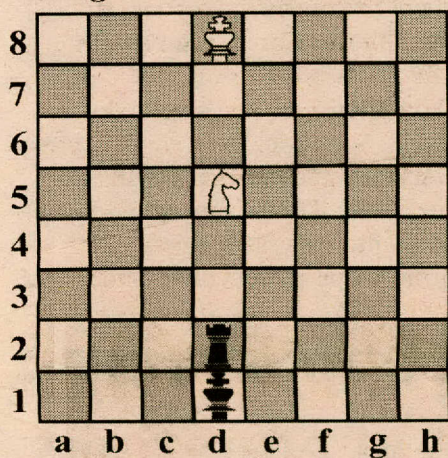
Richard Crespo
Terrell Unit

Tactics — the pin

If you are already acquainted with this tactical theme, you know that a pin is a tactical idea that prevents or discourages an opponent's piece from moving off a line, lest it expose a piece to capture or a key square to occupation. The pinned piece acts like a shield.

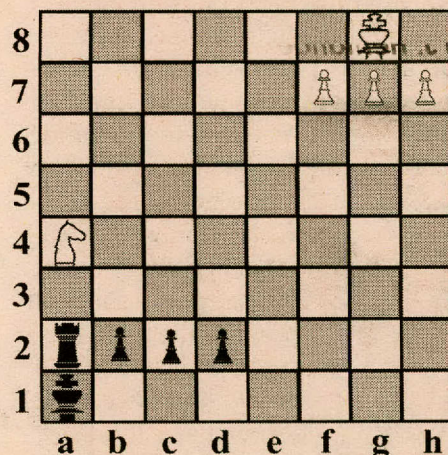
Absolute pin — arises when the shielded piece is the king or a mate threat, then of course the pinned piece is not allowed to move away. See diagrams A and B.

Diagram A: Absolute Pin



White's knight is pinned because it shields the king.

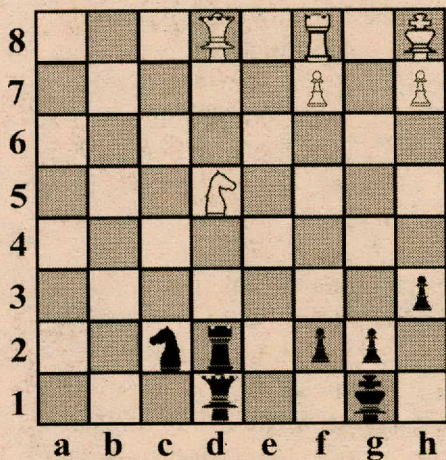
Diagram B: Absolute Pin (Key square occupation)



White's knight is pinned because the key square Ra8 will mate (black rank mate.)

Relative pin — involves covering pieces other than the king, where the covered piece is more valuable than the pinned pieces. See diagram C.

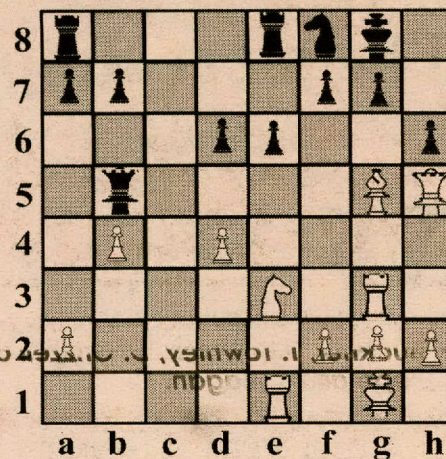
Diagram C: Relative pin



The strong d file battery of black's rook and queen dominate this position. Unlike the absolute pin, the shielding piece Nd5 can move but the queen will fall.

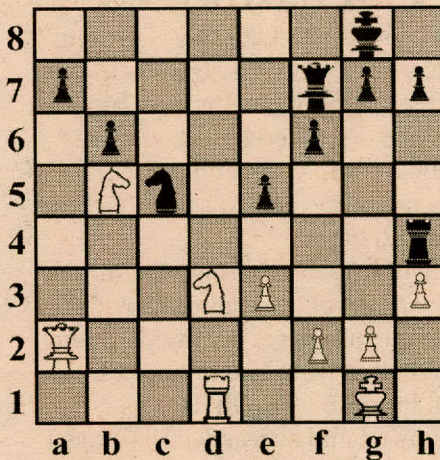
Here are a few pinning problems — have fun solving them!

Problem 4: White to move



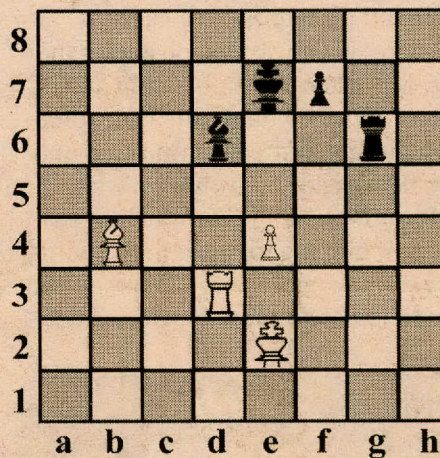
Carlos Torre (W) — Emanuel Lasker (B)
1. Bf6 Qxh5 (pawn on g7 is pinned)
2. Rxe7+ Kh8
3. Rxf7+ Kg8
4. Rg7+ Kh8
5. Rxb7+ Kg8
6. Rg7+ Kh8
7. Rg5+ Kh7
8. Rxe5 Kg6
9. Rh3 Kxf6
10. Rxe6+ Decisive material advantage.
This famous "windmill" combination was first played in the game between Mexican champion Carlos Torre and world champion Emanuel Lasker.

Problem 3: White to move



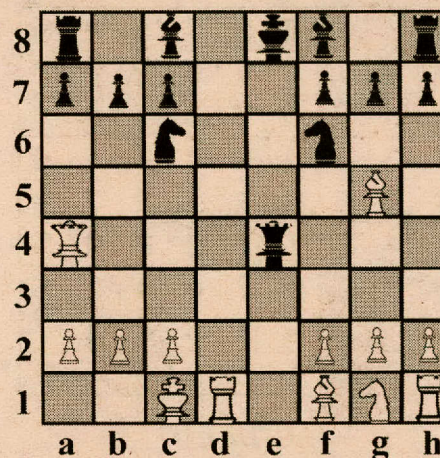
1. Nxe5!! Wins. Black's queen is in an absolute pin and faces a mate threat if 1... Qxa2 2. Rd8++

Problem 2: White to move



1. Rxd6! Rxd6 White's bishop has an absolute pin. 2. e5

Problem 1: White to move

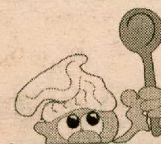


White produced the following brilliancy:
1. Rd8+! Decoy.
1... Kxd8 Now black's Nf6 is pinned.
2. Qxe4 White wins a queen for a rook.

Chess terms

Decoy — a tactical idea in which an enemy piece is obliged to move to a particular square or line, with catastrophic consequences.

Hole — a weakness in the pawn structure that provides an ideal home for enemy pieces.



RECIPES

BUTTERFINGER DELIGHT FUDGE

By Tara B. Clayton
Woodman Unit

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons hot chocolate
- 1/2 cup vanilla wafers
- 1 packet of oatmeal
- Chocolate syrup
- 2 tablespoons of instant milk
- 1 packet of whey - vanilla
- 3 crushed macaroon cookies
- 1 whole Butterfinger candy bar

Directions:

Mix hot chocolate, vanilla wafers and oatmeal with one tablespoon of hot water and press into a crust. Mix dry milk, whey-vanilla, macaroon cookies and two squirts of chocolate syrup with two tablespoons of water. Pour this over the crust. Crush the Butterfinger candy bar and sprinkle it over the fudge. Let set for three hours.

JACK MACK FIESTA

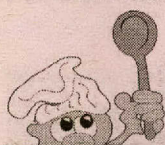
By Curtis Colvin
Gib Lewis Unit

Ingredients:

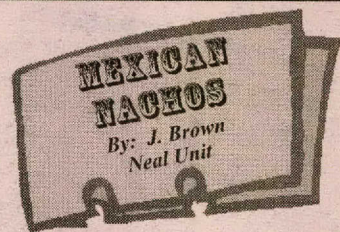
- 3 jack macks
- 1 soup - 2 seasoning packs
- 1/2 bag of rice
- 1 bag of hot peanuts
- 1 ranch dressing
- 1/4 bottle of squeeze cheese
- 1/2 bag of pork skins (semi-crushed)
- 1/2 pickle (chopped)
- 2 jalapenos (chopped)
- 1 summer sausage (optional)

Directions:

Cook rice and soup together and let stand for two hours until cool. (This is a cold dish.) Put jack macks, ranch dressing, hot peanuts, squeeze cheese, pork skins, pickle and jalapenos into another bowl. Add two seasoning packs. Mix (add cool water if needed or pickle juice). Top with your favorite chips. Feeds two hungry dudes.



RECIPES



Ingredients:

- ¼ bag tortilla chips
- ¼ bottle squeeze cheese
- ¼ bottle picante sauce
- 1 package of Mexican taco meat
- 1 package of jalapeno peppers

Directions:

Take ¼ bottle of squeeze cheese, ¼ bottle of picante sauce and Mexican taco meat and put into empty bag. Be sure to mash contents of bag until thoroughly mixed. Then place the bag in hot pot for approximately 30 minutes. While waiting, dice jalapenos. Empty ¼ bag of tortilla chips into bowl. After 30 minutes of cooking, take contents in bag and pour onto tortilla chips. Place diced jalapenos on top of spread and enjoy!



Ingredients:

- 3 jack macks
- 1 beef stew
- 1 V8 juice
- ½ pickle (chopped)
- 2 jalapenos (chopped)
- 1 soup
- ½ bag of rice
- 2 teaspoons hot sauce
- 2 flour tortillas (cut up small)
- 2 chili season packs
- 1 beef season packs
- 1 summer sausage
- 1 tsp cheese (optional)

Directions:

Put jack mack juice (only) in a bag. Add V8 juice, pickles, jalapenos, beef stew, hot sauce, season packs, and half summer sausage cut in cubes. Heat until hot. In a big bowl, mix soup with rice. Add dry jack mack on top plus other half of summer sausage and tortillas and cheese. Add hot water to an inch above mixture. Cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes. Add V8 juice mix, stir, and divide into two bowls. Add corn chips on top, and enjoy!

Finding me

By Amanda Abbott
Lane Murray Unit

Have you ever felt like everything is tumbling down? Like everything is just so wrong? Like this is the end? That's how I felt when I was first incarcerated. As time passed, however, I began to understand and learn things I would never have realized. I opened my eyes and said, "It's time for a change!"

I got myself into school and took advantage of the classes provided. I've recently received my GED and graduated from two other classes, but it doesn't stop there. I've achieved and succeeded in things I never thought I could. Are you thinking things are not that easy? That's the same thing I thought. I've been through the depression, stress and troubled moments.

There will always be obstacles in life; but when you fall, get up and keep trying. If you really want something in life, put your mind to it and you'll succeed. I now have a whole new outlook on life. I'm a changed person, moving forward in life without looking back. Being incarcerated can help change you. However, it's all up to you. E

Sudoku solutions

Easy

8	6	1	2	9	7	5	4	3
4	3	7	8	1	5	9	6	2
2	5	9	4	6	3	7	8	1
7	2	8	3	5	9	6	1	4
3	9	5	6	4	1	2	7	8
1	4	6	7	2	8	3	9	5
9	8	3	5	7	4	1	2	6
5	1	2	9	8	6	4	3	7
6	7	4	1	3	2	8	5	9

Difficult

1	8	5	6	2	9	4	3	7
4	3	6	1	7	5	2	9	8
2	7	9	3	4	8	1	6	5
3	1	4	5	6	2	8	7	9
5	9	7	4	8	1	3	2	6
8	6	2	9	3	7	5	1	4
6	4	8	7	1	3	9	5	2
9	2	3	8	5	6	7	4	1
7	5	1	2	9	4	6	8	3

Troublemaker

By Anonymous

Here I am, in the same old place. I have been here about 10 years. This morning I am angry. The anger is not for something I did but, rather, something that was done to me.

I'm talking about the offenders at my unit. They are no different than the offenders on other units. I just want to say, "Thank you." Thanks for having us on lock-down again. Yeah, you make hooch, smoke weed, dip and smoke tobacco in our presence, but you claim that you don't want anyone in your business. If you believe that, why do you put us in your business? You get drunk, get high, dip and smoke your stuff. And then, when it's found in our general living area, you let us suffer for what is yours.

You have a name for those who snitch, but what do you call yourself for bringing all this misery and inconvenience to the rest of us? Surely you are not a convict, inmate, offender or prisoner because if you were,

you would not let us all go down with you.

You claim that it's all part of the game. My question to you is, whose game? I'm not even in your clique. As I see it, you have no ambition, so prison is still a childish game to you.

I lose my privilege to take a shower, go to rec, go to the commissary, go to school, and eat a hot meal because you won't take care of your business. Take responsibility for your own actions. Go tell the man who you are! Why take us all down?

You encourage snitches with your arrogance, and then call them names! Give *yourself* a name. No, not convict; not inmate; not offender; not prisoner. You are less than any of those. You're even less than a snitch.

You know who you are, so don't deny it. Sooner or later you will grasp it. And my guess is that it will be much later. Try to comprehend why your sentence is so long and why parole keeps giving you set-offs. E

**Preparation and opportunity:
The most simple of equations**

J. Nathan Wilson
Polunsky Unit

When I was 17 years old, I wanted to drive trucks.

However, it seemed that everywhere I sought employment I was told that I was too young and that I had no experience. I refused to give up, got my Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and dedicated myself to maintaining an impeccable driving record. I was prepared when someone finally declared, "I think I'll give him a try."

Almost two decades later I was still driving. Then I lost focus and ended up in prison.

While incarcerated I decided to relegate truck driving to a backup plan and try something else. I embarked on an academic venture. During that journey I lost count of the times I was told that I won't find a job doing this or that, and that jobs requiring degrees were off-limits to ex-cons. I refused to be deterred, continued my academic endeavors and concluded them with both bachelor and gradu-

ate degrees. Along the way one of the most important things I learned was to never expect support and/or encouragement from others. The drive to succeed must come from within.

One of life's most relevant equations boils down to simple math: opportunity plus preparation equals success. Many offenders sit in prison, afraid to venture out of their comfort zones (good jobs, laid back unit, cool

cellie, close to home, etc.) to take advantage of vocational and educational opportunities that will prepare them for success upon release. It's easy to kick back and let time pass. It takes commitment, hard work

and sometimes sacrifice to prepare in prison for something that will prove valuable and worthwhile in the future in the free world. I've found the most valuable things a person can take to the freeworld are education and training. Your future and decent livelihood will hinge on being prepared when that person says, "I think I'll give him (or her) a try." E

